



Program Summaries 2022-2024

1930 Ninth Avenue, Helena MT 59601

Phone: 406-457-8900

Fax: 406-447-8443

publichealth@lccountymt.gov

www.LewisAndClarkHealth.org

The mission of the Lewis and Clark Public Health is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis and Clark County residents.

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION

What does the Community Health Promotion team do? *The Community Health Promotion Division is responsible for promoting and providing a variety of programs and services for the benefit of residents of Lewis and Clark County and surrounding counties. Division staff focuses on pregnancy and parenting support, WIC supplemental nutrition, prevention programs and improving health systems.*

HEALTHY FAMILIES HOME VISITING

The Healthy Families Home Visiting team provides voluntary, preventive in-home services to pregnant women and families with young children. The Healthy Families Home Visiting team is made up of trained professionals in the areas of nursing, education, social work, and psychology. The goal is to provide support, screening, education, community referrals, and advocacy to improve physical, cognitive, and emotional health outcomes for children, parents, and caregivers, utilizing multiple evidence-based programs. Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting model which teaches parents about developmental milestones and increases family literacy. PAT serves families with children up to age five. Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) serves pregnant women who may have high risk factors and serves families with children up to age two. The Montana Asthma Program assists individuals with a primary diagnosis of asthma and are having trouble controlling symptoms. This program focuses on children but can serve individuals at any age. The home visiting team also provides Circle of Security Parenting education classes and parent support groups are available to anyone in our community and focuses on developing specific relationship capacities. The 7 Generations program serves the caregivers, children under 3, and incarcerated parents at the Lewis and Clark Detention Center (LCDC). This is a long-term collaboration between LCPH and LCDC to reduce intergenerational incarceration. A Home Visiting Nurse from the team leads the county's Fetal, Infant, Child, Maternal Mortality review team (FICMMR).

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offers healthy food, breastfeeding support, nutrition assessment and education, and connection to community resources to MT residents who are: pregnant; breastfeeding, up to baby's first birthday; non-breastfeeding mothers, up

to six months after baby's birth or loss; and infants and children under five years. Supplemental food specific to individual nutritional issues is provided through vouchers redeemable at grocery stores. Eligibility is determined by nutritional assessment and income. WIC is one of the primary referral sources to many other social service and health programs in the department and in the community. The program sees an average of 800 participants a month and works closely with the Home Visiting Program to provide comprehensive nutrition education and breastfeeding support to families in Lewis and Clark County. WIC includes two special projects: Farmers' Market Program which encourages families to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables at the Farmers' Market and Peer Counseling for breastfeeding support.

COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CONTROL PREVENTION

Comprehensive Cancer Control staff provides public education, community outreach and cancer screening services to residents of Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, and Meagher counties. The program implements evidence-based interventions to prevent cancer and increase cancer screening rates in the region. The screening services target under/uninsured men and women ages 21-64 who meet financial eligibility guidelines. Payment for breast and cervical cancer screenings is available through the program. Case management and patient navigation services are available for women in the program who are diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer. Patient navigation is also available to women who meet eligibility requirements but do not need their screenings paid for. Community funding from United Way supplement and make available services for people in need who do not meet program eligibility requirements. Additionally, staff provides technical assistance to worksites as they assess, plan, implement, and evaluate comprehensive worksite wellness initiatives. The health department facilitates the Healthy Communities Coalition which brings together community partners to address chronic disease impacts and plan evidence-based strategies to address the identified need, including cancer prevention.

CONNECT REFERRAL SYSTEM

CONNECT is a bidirectional referral network that allows client contact information to be sent between service providers. The secure web-based system is available at no cost to approved organizations that make client referrals. The goal of CONNECT is to reduce common barriers for external referrals and increase client uptake in services. CONNECT is for social service agencies, schools, medical providers, mental health providers, and anyone offering a necessary support service to families, children, or adults. Staff is responsible for recruiting and training new agencies and providing technical assistance to system users.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

The Behavioral Health Systems Improvement Specialist is the County point of contact for behavioral health and is responsible for the aspects of the Community Health Improvement Plan that relate to the topic. Staff works with key partners to create crisis and continuum of care design, implementation, and evaluation of strategies and best practices to improve the capacity and performance of the local behavioral health systems. Staff coordinates the Behavioral Health Systems Improvement Leadership Team and the Lewis and Clark County Local Advisory Council.

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Suicide Prevention Program at Lewis and Clark Public Health serves to reduce suicide in Lewis and Clark, Broadwater and Jefferson counties through community empowerment and multi-sector collaboration. Because suicide is a complex issue, the program follows a multi-pronged, evidence-

based approach to address these unnecessary deaths through prevention, intervention, and postvention. Strategies include community and workforce education, lethal means reduction, cultural competency, and support for suicide loss survivors. It also focuses on higher-risk populations, including service members, veterans and their families, LGBTQ, youth, middle-aged men, and seniors. Funded by a five-year Mental Health Awareness Training grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Suicide Prevention Program is overseen by a suicide prevention coordinator. This position facilitates the Lewis and Clark Suicide Prevention Coalition (LCSPC), organizes awareness events, and collaborates with stakeholders to identify, adopt, and implement best practice models at the local level.

Staff leads and participate in the work of Safer Communities Montana (SCM), which is a subgroup of LCSPC. SCM advocates for suicide prevention in Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson counties through collaboration with the firearm and pharmaceutical communities to reduce lethal means access by people at-risk. SCM does so by providing appropriate suicide prevention tools and training to pharmacies, firearm-related businesses, health providers, and community members. The campaign aims to create a community that is more aware, educated, and understanding of how to protect an at-risk customer, patient or loved one from accessing lethal means to attempt suicide.

TOBACCO USE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Lewis & Clark County Tobacco Use Prevention Program serves both Lewis & Clark and Broadwater counties and coordinates with Jefferson County to raise community awareness about the harmful health effects of tobacco. Staff works to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke among youth and adults, develop and implement tobacco prevention policies, decrease the promotion of tobacco products, and link people who want to quit using tobacco to cessation services. The program partners with the community, working with area schools to enhance tobacco control policies, tobacco prevention education, and youth advocacy activities, and collaborating with health groups, prevention organizations, and citizens to reduce the burden of tobacco-related disease and preventable death in our community. The health department leads the Healthy Communities Coalition which brings together community partners to address chronic disease impacts and plan evidence-based strategies to address the identified need, including tobacco prevention.

DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION DIVISION

What does the Disease Control and Prevention team do? *The purpose of the Disease Control and Prevention Division is to protect the public from communicable disease, provide immunizations to people of all ages, provide rural school nursing, inspect restaurants and other licensed facilities, and prepare the health department for emergency response.*

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL & SURVEILLANCE

Communicable disease has the potential to affect every county resident. The most susceptible people are those who are unimmunized or under-immunized, those with weakened immune systems, and those whose work or leisure activities put them at risk for disease.

Public health nurses investigate reports of communicable disease received from medical care providers, hospitals, and laboratories. Environmental Health Specialists investigate illnesses that may have been caused by contaminated food, water or vectors (insects, animals). Disease investigation helps prevent the spread of communicable disease. Communicable disease staff conduct walk in immunization clinics. They also do tuberculosis case control; HIV/AIDS testing, counseling, and prevention education; rural public health nursing; childcare immunization record assessment, and communicable disease surveillance.

DENTAL SCREENING

A public health nurse coordinates a countywide screening program that uses school nurses, dental hygienists, and dentists to screen elementary school children (grades 3 and 4) for dental decay. The local dental society arranges to assess children who are unable to pay for needed treatment. Children are seen in local dentists' offices and at PureView Health Center Dental Clinic. The dental hygienists and school nurses provide dental education for children in grades one and five.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The purpose of the health department's emergency preparedness program is to improve the department's ability to respond to threats to public health. Work includes improving surveillance of communicable diseases; updating emergency response plans; improving emergency communications capability; and conducting preparedness exercises.

HIV/AIDS COUNSELING AND TESTING SERVICES

HIV/AIDS prevention services include anonymous testing and counseling, and primary prevention activities such as peer education and outreach to high-risk, hard-to-reach target populations. Public health nurses do partner notification work for all HIV positive individuals.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Nurses provide immunizations for people of all ages; assess records for families, schools, and day cares; and educate the public about immunizations. Immunization clinics are held at the health department by appointment. Off-site clinics are provided for seasonal influenza immunizations.

LICENSED ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION

The purpose of the licensed establishment program is to prevent communicable diseases from food and unsanitary conditions, to ensure compliance with state rules for licensed establishments, and to provide education to the community.

Environmental Health Specialists inspect hotels, motels, bed and breakfast facilities, public swimming pools and spas, campgrounds and trailer courts, daycares, and group homes. Food establishment inspection includes retail and wholesale food operations, Farmers Market, mobile food units, and short-term events. They concentrate on food facilities because of the large number of people potentially at risk. Food establishment inspections include observing preparation and storage procedures, monitoring food temperatures, seeking potential sources of cross-contamination, observing hygienic practices of employees, and reviewing the general sanitation and maintenance of the establishment.

RURAL PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING & RURAL SCHOOL NURSING

A part-time public health nurse from Augusta covers the Augusta area. She manages communicable disease, maternal and child support, provides immunizations, adult care information, first aid, and community education. She is also a liaison between Augusta residents and the PureView Health Center.

Once a month during the school year, a public health nurse travels to Wolf Creek Lincoln, and Canyon Creek schools to provide school nurse services. School nursing includes:

- health lessons
- screening and referral for vision, hearing, dental, and scoliosis
- assessing student health concerns
- assessing immunization records

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Public health nurses investigate and respond to control the spread of all reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases in the county.

HIV PREVENTION SERVICES

HIV/AIDS prevention services include anonymous testing and counseling, primary prevention activities such as peer education, and outreach to high risk hard-to-reach target populations.

TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL

Public Health nurses administer TB screening tests, refer clients with positive skin tests for medical workup, and manage preventive/curative medications for clients with infection or disease. They also manage follow-up of TB cases in the county and provide education about TB for clients, their families, and community groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

What does the Environmental Services team do? *The Environmental Services Division protects public health by making sure the air, soil, and water are not contaminated with pollutants that endanger human health. The division concerns itself with on-site wastewater, subdivision review, air and water quality, community decay enforcement, junk vehicles, and East Helena lead education.*

AIR QUALITY

The health department contracts with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to monitor and control air quality. An air quality monitor is located at Rossiter School in the Helena valley and runs every third day throughout the year. In addition, sanitarians enforce the Outdoor Air Quality Regulations. These regulations control the types of fuels that can be burned, the opacity or density of the smoke emanating from chimneys, and they restrict burning on poor air quality days.

EAST HELENA LEAD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEAP)

The goal of the program is to protect public and environmental health and to protect the cleanup activities that that occurred within the East Helena Superfund area. LEAP provides lead education to the community, facilitates blood lead screening for all East Helena residents, and regulates the movement and use of potentially contaminated soil through the East Helena Soils Regulation. Program staff maintains soil, dust, and water sampling data collected in the East Helena area during residential environmental assessments and through the larger soils removal program run by US EPA.

Childhood blood lead levels have been dropping for the past 20 years in East Helena, according to Lewis & Clark Public Health in-house data collection efforts. The drop can be attributed to many factors, including the removal of lead from gasoline and paint, the closing of the Asarco smelter, and the remediation of approximately 1500 residential yards and community facilities. Based on current available data, blood levels of children in East Helena are lower than the national average. Regulations were adopted in 2013 to govern the displacement and disposal of soils within the East Helena Superfund Area, protect cleanup efforts, and preserve public health. The program oversees implementation of the regulations.

JUNK VEHICLES

The health department contracts with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to administer the junk vehicle program. Sanitarians enforce state law which requires vehicles that are unlicensed, substantially wrecked, and inoperable to be removed, shielded from public view, or licensed. A variable number of vehicles are hauled each year as a free service under this program. The number hauled is highly dependent on the market value of metal. When metal prices are up, people tend to haul their own junk vehicles. The program is also responsible for annual inspections of the licensed vehicle wrecking facilities as well as complaints regarding unlicensed facilities.

ON-SITE WASTEWATER

The Environmental Services Division protects public health and controls environmental pollution by regulating treatment and disposal of wastewater in Lewis and Clark County. Activities include site evaluation, permitting and inspection of new wastewater treatment systems, as well as investigation of complaints and enforcement of the on-site wastewater treatment regulations. The program also includes

a maintenance program that requires wastewater system owners to perform maintenance activities every 3-5 years.

SUBDIVISION REVIEW

The health department contracts with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to review minor subdivisions proposed in the county. A minor subdivision is defined as a division of land creative five or fewer lots that are less than 20 acres in size. Subdivision review ensures that an adequate supply of potable water is available, along with proper wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal facilities. Subdivision review is integrated into the on-site wastewater treatment and permitting program.

WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DISTRICT (WQPD)

The WQPD was created in July 1992 to preserve, protect, and improve water quality within district boundaries. This goal is accomplished by protecting and reducing the risk of contamination to surface and groundwater supplies. Projects and programs of the district include the Water Watchers education program for fourth and fifth graders; water quality sampling and monitoring; outreach; public education; protection of Tenmile Creek, Silver Creek and Prickly Pear-Lake Helena Watershed; and assessment of groundwater resources within district boundaries.

COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

The communications manager focuses on media relations and dissemination of public information through a variety of channels. This position writes and distributes news releases, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor. It also writes and designs brochures, posters, and other promotional materials for the agency. This position maintains the agency's website and all social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat). This position also provides guidance related to messaging and dissemination of public information.

EPIDEMIOLOGY PROGRAM

The role of epidemiologist is to help advance public knowledge and public health policy by applying research and science-based public health practice. In this role the epidemiologist works to build epidemiological capacity at a local level by applying and promoting skills in data analytics and support data modernization efforts.

Example projects in which epidemiologist is involved include COVID-19 response, the development of Community Health Report, analyzing data, describing, and publishing findings using variety of analytical and presentation tools such as Statistical Analysis System (SAS) and Geographic Information System mapping (GIS).

Epidemiologist works with other state and county public health epidemiologists, advocates, academic institutions, media representatives, legal constituency, and responds to public inquiries to accurately describe scientific information conveying the health of our community.

